



City of Lodi News Release

For Immediate Release

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Web: www.lodi.gov

City, County take steps to prevent COVID-19 exposure at Lodi church

LODI – Officials from the City of Lodi and San Joaquin County are taking additional steps to prevent a Lodi church from having meetings that violate health orders intended to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Dr. Maggie Park, the interim Public Health Officer for San Joaquin County, issued an order Friday prohibiting public assembly at the location used by Cross Culture Christian Center church for its services. The group defied a previous request from the Lodi Police Department to suspend their meetings, which violated the County's public health order prohibiting gatherings.

"It's unfortunate we have to go to these lengths when the threat of COVID-19 is so clear," City Attorney Janice Magdich said. "It is gratifying, however, to see other churches in Lodi understand their responsibility to protect public health by suspending in-person gatherings."

The new order prohibits public assembly at the church's meeting location, Bethel Open Bible Church at 760 S. Ham Lane. Although Bethel Open Bible Church leases space to Cross Culture Christian Center, it has not been holding services due because of the pandemic. Lodi police posted the notice Friday evening.

Magdich said Cross Culture Christian Church could conduct services via online streaming services or other technology, which is allowed under Gov. Newsom's order, as many other Lodi churches are doing.

Police officers first visited the church on March 25 to inform members they were in violation of stay-at-home orders issued by Gov. Newsom and Dr. Park, consistent with their education-first approach. Police saw another gathering on March 29, and on April 1 posted a notice of public nuisance at the church, citing the orders.

In addition, the City contacted the property owner, Bethel Open Bible Church, to ensure it was aware its tenant was violating the stay-at-home orders. Magdich said Bethel Open Bible Church has been cooperating with the City's efforts to enforce the orders.

For more information and facts on coronavirus, please visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus and www.sjready.org.

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